

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06452 201349Z

65

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-07 IO-13

CCO-00 SSM-03 SAM-01 SAJ-01 SCCT-01 OPR-02 A-01 /081 W

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O R 201310Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1241

ZINFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 4271

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6452

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MILI, LE, SY

SUBJECT: CHANGING MOOD IN BEIRUT

1. MOODS IN BEIRUT CHANGE LIKE RAPIDLY SHIFTING DESERT SANDS. YESTERDAY AND THE TWO DAYS BEFORE, ONE COULD FEEL THE APPREHENSION AND TENSION IN THE AIR. MANY BELIEVED THE CANARD OF AN IMMINENT SYRIAN-MARONITE-U.S.-ISRAELI COORDINATED ATTACK. THREATS OF LIBERATION OF WEST BEIRUT BY MARONITES CARRIED BY RADIO ON OTHER SIDE FURTHER STIRRED THE POT. FINALLY, US ANNOUNCEMENT OF REDUCTION OF EMBASSY SIZE AND ORGANIZATION OF AN EVACUATION CONVOY ADDED TO CONCERNS.

2. TODAY, ALL OF A SUDDEN, WE SENSE A CHANGE. MEETINGS YESTERDAY BETWEEN PHALANGE REPRESENTATIVES AND ARAFAT (SEE SITREP), INDICATIONS THAT PLO DELEGATION WILL HEAD FOR DAMASCUS AND, SURPRISINGLY, CONCILIATORY STATEMENTS BY JUMBLATT HAVE CALMED PEOPLE'S NERVES. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD ME TODAY HE THOUGHT THERE IS NOW GOOD POSSIBILITY OF A REAL DIALOGUE--WHERE HAVE WE HEARD THAT BEFORE? EVEN OUR
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ANNOUNCEMENT OF POSTPONEMENT OF EVACUATION CONVOY HAS BEEN

INTERPRETED BY MANY BEIRUTIS AS INDICATION THAT WE HAVE TAKEN
HEART AT POSITIVE SIGNS IN THE AIR AND FOR THIS REASON HAVE
CANCELLED THE EVACUATION*

3. FOREGOING SHOWS HOW QUICKLY MOODS CHANGE HERE AND WHY
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE TAKE THEM INTO ACCOUNT IN TIMING OF OUR
EVACUATION ACTIONS.
SEELYE

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NNN

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